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INTRODUCTION

Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownde'.' "

She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

"Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

The next person * we interviewed several blocks away expressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

"Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vegetable garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[23a, e] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

"Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69c] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, e, d]

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per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

"I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place." [15]

"Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm." [8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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Frogtown and Currytown

WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communities, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens; but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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"Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

The work of two wood carvers was brought to our attention. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib).[A] He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia).[A] One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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551 [115] "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July." [20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody [777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re- [252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the 824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 322 000 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23] The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks," recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

"'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, ceduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

"No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

"Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes. deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[68] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34c] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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674
682
[533]
[539]

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body 764 wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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764 "No, I dohn pay much mine tuh names," said Margaret
[777] Snead. "But I do pay tention tuh bad luck dates. Look uh
po Catherine De Lanzy, depribe ub all duh propuh tings dat
come fo burial, cuz it wuz a double bad luck date. Folks at
[775] duh Pint do say dat uh spirit nebuh will res in duh grabe." [36]

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123 771 754 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when assured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 (115) "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

• 777 754 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 825 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 789 (759) (777) Professional witch doctors and root doctors [49] ply an active trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
209 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
796 all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh [533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh uddubs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck* and to give warning
789 by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the
[777] wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,*] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

"I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do anything roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

"Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused, "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat."[22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
(292) buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
(783) tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh
dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast
duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in
duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all bap-
tize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins
be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise
duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agree-
ment and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed
rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost
see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we
could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins
were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section
and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for
those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh
spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
• (777) hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh
do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death
away from home the body is brought back to its native town
for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we
learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
(609) beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks.
Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [2]

795 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and sev-
eral small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 189 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," interposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 535 [178] Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[38]

"We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

"Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," volunteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [39]

When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben, who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [38]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [38]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she

[782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.

796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes

[782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh

[783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [62]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us.

262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they

•777

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had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong udduh tings." [65]

Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daughter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old. A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large

* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

764 We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

(567) "We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

(178) "Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37a] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um fuh duh feas.[35a] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[38] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

(782) (775) "Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.

(777) "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck. Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sperrit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[44] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

(782) (775) (777) (169) Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she believed in conjure.

754 "I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

"Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

"I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us, "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

Baker told us that many people in the section refused to eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

"Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
(777) no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

795 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]
845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[59] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
(825) mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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796 533 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 825 789 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire, burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[12b] It is also considered bad luck 484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method •777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you 789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im- 759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

795 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 825 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[12a]

821 796 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island

her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a wash-stand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12), Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
[825] a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue unless it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[777] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
774 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.